DOGE and Musk Debunked

This document does not serve as an analysis on what we should be spending money on. Nor is it a dive into every claim made by DOGE and Musk. It is simply analyzing some of the larger claims made that have since been debunked. It is important to retroactively analyze claims in an effort to understand what is currently occurring. More claims may be added in the future, including the Politico one.

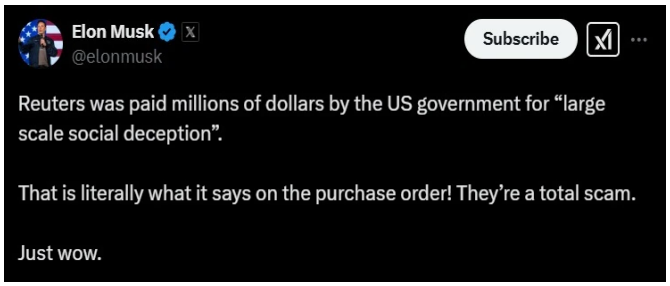
Reuters

Musk has misrepresented a U.S. Department of Defense contract with Thomson Reuters Special Services (TRSS), alleging involvement in "large scale social deception." From 2018 to 2022, TRSS was awarded a four-year, $9 million contract by the U.S. Department of Defense. The purpose of this contract was to evaluate defensive tools against social engineering attacks—cyber threats that manipulate individuals into divulging sensitive information. TRSS's role involved simulating adversarial attacks to assess the effectiveness of these defense mechanisms, not to deceive the public. Musk claimed that "Reuters was paid millions of dollars by the US government for 'large scale social deception'," while Trump demanded that Reuters "GIVE BACK THE MONEY, NOW!" Thomson Reuters has refuted these allegations and clarified that TRSS is a separate legal entity from Reuters news.

Reuters News is the global news organization that operates as part of **Thomson Reuters**, maintaining editorial independence.

TRSS is a **wholly owned subsidiary of Thomson Reuters** but operates separately, providing intelligence, data analytics, and consulting services primarily to U.S. government agencies.

Musk, however, is specifically referencing Reuters news with no intention of revising his statements to be toward TRSS or the parent company. This is evidenced throughout his quoted posts showing that Musk is firing back at Reuters for running “hit pieces” on Musk. Musk’s behavior toward Reuters news as a whole is explored in more detail further in this document. The irony is that by spreading and promoting this misinformation on X, Musk himself has performed large scale social deception, the very thing he is claiming Reuters News committed.


Elon Musk
@elonmusk
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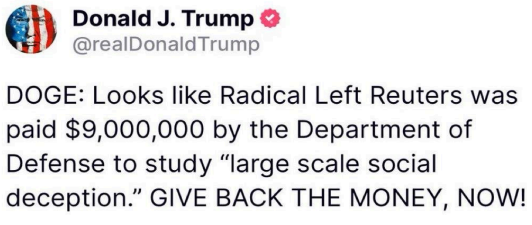
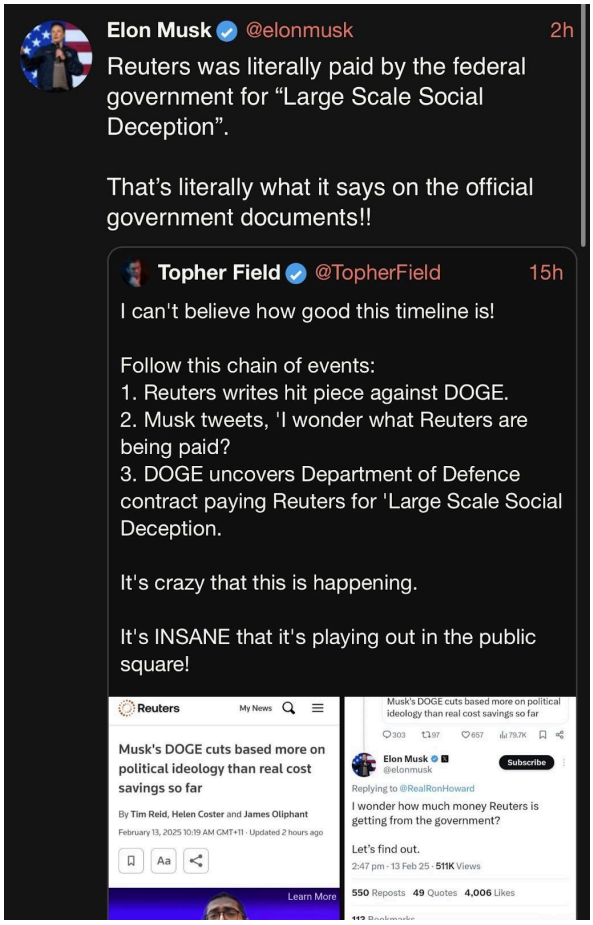
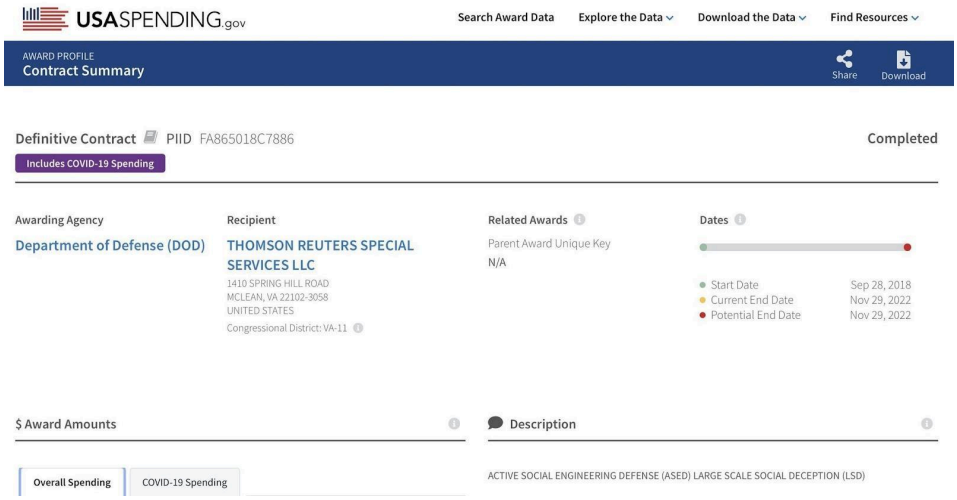
Reuters was paid millions of dollars by the US government for “large scale social deception”.
That is literally what it says on the purchase order! They’re a total scam.
Just wow.


Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
DOGE: Looks like Radical Left Reuters was paid $9,000,000 by the Department of Defense to study “large scale social deception.” GIVE BACK THE MONEY, NOW!


Elon Musk @elonmusk 2h
Reuters was literally paid by the federal government for “Large Scale Social Deception”.
That’s literally what it says on the official government documents!!
Topher Field @TopherField 15h
I can't believe how good this timeline is!
Follow this chain of events:
1. Reuters writes hit piece against DOGE.
2. Musk tweets, 'I wonder what Reuters are being paid?
3. DOGE uncovers Department of Defence contract paying Reuters for 'Large Scale Social Deception.
It's crazy that this is happening.
It's INSANE that it's playing out in the public square!
Reuters
My News
Musk's DOGE cuts based more on political ideology than real cost savings so far
By Tim Reid, Helen Coster and James Oliphant
February 13, 2025 10:19 AM GMT+11 · Updated 2 hours ago
Aa
Learn More
Musk's DOGE cuts based more on political ideology than real cost savings so far
Elon Musk
@elonmusk
Subscribe
Replying to @RealRonHoward
I wonder how much money Reuters is getting from the government?
Let's find out.
2:47 pm · 13 Feb 25 · 511K Views
550 Reposts 49 Quotes 4,006 Likes

The contract is easily accessible online by anyone in the public. Interestingly enough, Musk has spread posts showcasing the contract in order to prove his point. The description section in the bottom right states “ACTIVE SOCIAL ENGINEERING DEFENSE (ASED) LARGE SCALE SOCIAL DECEPTION (LSD)”.

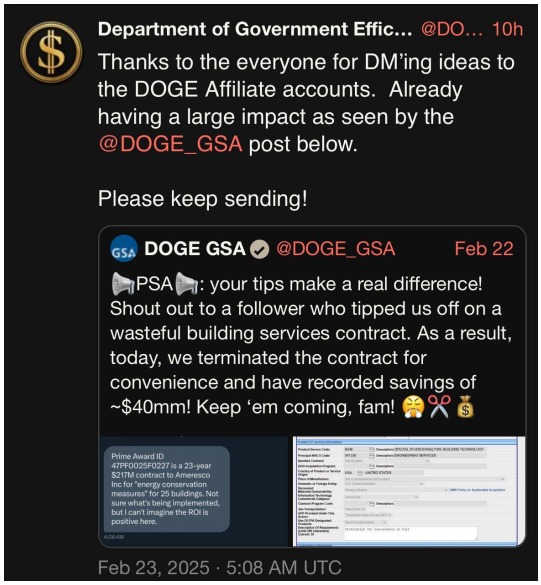


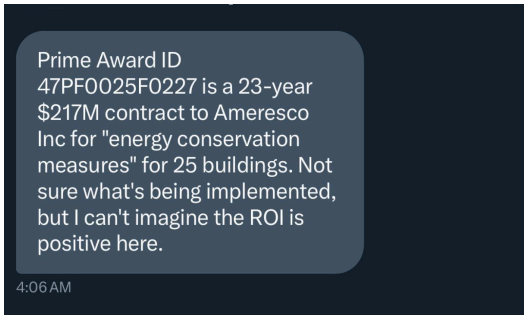
Sources:

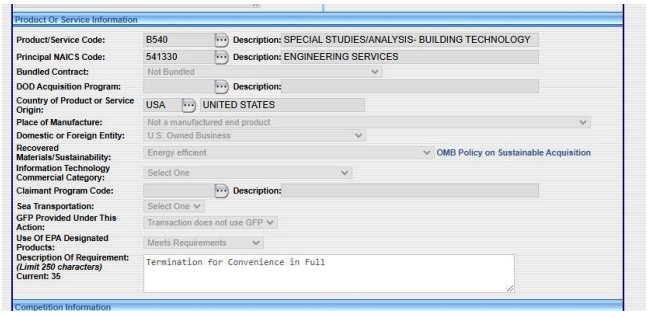
https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/02/15/musk-doge-deception-reuters/
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/us/news-agency-reuters-is-in-donald-trump-and-elon-musks-line-of-fire-but-theres-a-catch-heres-what-happened/articleshow/118278664.cms?from=mdr
https://www.reuters.com/business/us-defense-department-contract-inaccurately-represented-social-media-says-2025-02-13

A quick aside (Regarding DOGE)

This morning, February 23rd 2025, the newest post on DOGE's official X account was the following:


Department of Government Effic... @DO... 10h
Thanks to the everyone for DM'ing ideas to the DOGE Affiliate accounts. Already having a large impact as seen by the @DOGE_GSA post below.
Please keep sending!
DOGE GSA @DOGE_GSA Feb 22
PSA: your tips make a real difference! Shout out to a follower who tipped us off on a wasteful building services contract. As a result, today, we terminated the contract for convenience and have recorded savings of ~$40mm! Keep 'em coming, fam!
Feb 23, 2025 · 5:08 AM UTC


Prime Award ID 47PF0025F0227 is a 23-year $217M contract to Ameresco Inc for "energy conservation measures" for 25 buildings. Not sure what's being implemented, but I can't imagine the ROI is positive here.
4:06 AM


Product Or Service Information
Product/Service Code: B540 Description: SPECIAL STUDIES/ANALYSIS- BUILDING TECHNOLOGY
Principal NAICS Code: 541330 Description: ENGINEERING SERVICES
Bundled Contract: Not Bundled
DOD Acquisition Program: Description:
Country of Product or Service Origin: USA UNITED STATES
Place of Manufacture: Not a manufactured end product
Domestic or Foreign Entity: U.S. Owned Business
Recovered Materials/Sustainability: Energy efficient
OMB Policy on Sustainable Acquisition
Information Technology Commercial Category: Select One
Claimant Program Code: Description:
Sea Transportation: Select One
GFP Provided Under This Action: Transaction does not use GFP
Use Of EPA Designated Products: Meets Requirements
Description Of Requirement: (Limit 250 characters) Current: 35
Termination for Convenience in Full
Competition Information

They provided no follow up information, and have seemingly terminated the contracted without fully investigating or understanding what the allocated money was being used for. Musk and the DOGE team did not provide any additional information including the names of the buildings, the size, and the work to be conducted. To be clear, "energy conservation measures" can mean any of the following:

1. Building Improvements

- **High-efficiency windows** (double/triple-pane, low-E coatings)

- **Weatherstripping and air sealing** to reduce drafts
- **Cool roofs** to reflect sunlight and reduce heat absorption

2. HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) Optimization

- **High-efficiency HVAC systems** (heat pumps, variable refrigerant flow)
- **Smart thermostats** and **zoned heating/cooling**
- **Regular maintenance and filter replacements**
- **Energy recovery ventilation (ERV) systems**

3. Lighting Efficiency

- **LED lighting** instead of incandescent or fluorescent bulbs
- **Occupancy sensors** to turn off lights in unoccupied areas

4. Water Conservation & Heating

- **Low-flow plumbing fixtures** (toilets, faucets, showerheads)
- **Tankless or high-efficiency water heaters**
- **Solar water heating systems**
- **Greywater recycling systems**

5. Smart Building Technologies

- **Building automation systems (BAS)** to optimize energy use
- **Energy monitoring and analytics software**
- **Smart plugs and power strips** to reduce phantom loads

And more. So it is concerning, but certainly not a new trend, that DOGE has been cancelling contracts without understanding the full details or scope of them.

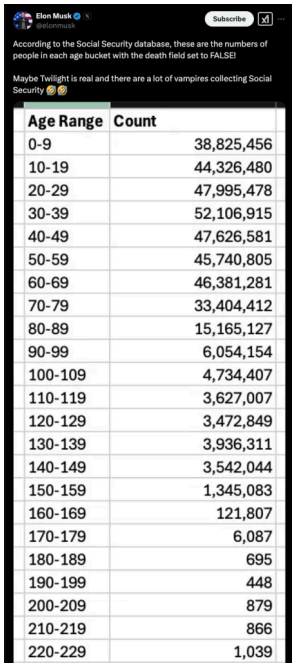
High end hotels for illegals

Musk claimed that "FEMA sent $59M LAST WEEK to luxury hotels in New York City to house illegal migrants … That money is meant for American disaster relief."
"Musk's claim is inaccurate. FEMA did not give money directly to New York hotels; it did give money to New York City. That move was neither illegal nor secretive. It was part of a program that Congress created and funded using money from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, not FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, which is primarily used after natural disasters. The money did not fund luxury hotel rooms for immigrants." (Austin American-Statesmen, source).
Congress created and funded this program, funds were not pulled from FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, and as it turns out, the hotels were not high-end. Only $19 million of the $59m was used for hotel costs in 2024. They spent an average of $156/night, well below rate for high-end hotels in NYC. Further information can be found in sources below, detailing the why and how this

money was sent and determined.
Sources:
https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2025/fema-sent-59-million-luxury-hotels-new-york-immigrants/
https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/comparing-per-diem-hotel-and-service-costs-for-shelter-for-asylum-seekers/
https://www.statesman.com/story/news/politics/politifact/2025/02/18/fema-did-not-give-disaster-relief-money-for-luxury-hotels-for-immigrants-new-york-elon-musk/78927623007/

Social Security

On X, Elon Musk has claimed to have found millions of 120+ year olds collecting social security based on the Social Security Database.


Elon Musk
@elonmusk
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According to the Social Security database, these are the numbers of people in each age bucket with the death field set to FALSE!
Maybe Twilight is real and there are a lot of vampires collecting Social Security

Age Range	Count
0-9	38,825,456
10-19	44,326,480
20-29	47,995,478
30-39	52,106,915
40-49	47,626,581
50-59	45,740,805
60-69	46,381,281
70-79	33,404,412
80-89	15,165,127
90-99	6,054,154
100-109	4,734,407
110-119	3,627,007
120-129	3,472,849
130-139	3,936,311
140-149	3,542,044
150-159	1,345,083
160-169	121,807
170-179	6,087
180-189	695
190-199	448
200-209	879
210-219	866
220-229	1,039

The same day, Karoline Leavitt, current White House Press Secretary, told Fox News, "They haven't dug into the books yet, but they suspect that there are tens of millions of deceased people who are receiving fraudulent Social Security payments" (Reuters, source).
Two days later: 'On Tuesday, Trump said at a press briefing in Florida that "we have millions and millions of people over 100 years old" receiving Social Security benefits. "They're obviously fraudulent or incompetent," Trump said.' (AP News, source)

"A July 2024 report from Social Security's inspector general states that from fiscal years 2015 through 2022, the agency paid out almost $8.6 trillion in benefits, including $71.8 billion — or less than 1% — in improper payments. Most of the erroneous payments were overpayments to living people…
Additionally, a series of reports from the Social Security Administration's inspector general in March 2023 and July 2024 state that the agency has not established a new system to properly

annotate death information in its database, which included roughly 18.9 million Social Security numbers of people born in 1920 or earlier but were not marked as deceased. This does not mean, however, that these individuals were receiving benefits….
…A July 2023 Social Security OIG report states that "almost none of the numberholders discussed in the report currently receive SSA payments." And, as of September 2015, the agency automatically stops payments to people who are older than 115 years old." (AP News, source)
"At the time of our review, approximately 44,000 of the 18.9 million numberholders were receiving SSA payments" (OIG, source)
The report did not specify how many out of these 44,000 could be improper payments, but it is highly likely a good portion are living Americans over 103 years old who do receive payments. Regarding Americans over 100 years old there are, "an estimated 101,000 in 2024" (Pew Research, source).

Sources:
https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/072401.pdf
https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/a-06-21-51022.pdf
https://apnews.com/article/social-security-doge-musk-trump-improper-payments-57f9e374e77e7a24fdff3afa294aa7fe

USAID condoms for Gaza

There has been an exhausting supply of misinformation surrounding USAID. This is just one instance that made headlines.
During Leavitts first White House press briefing she claimed that Musk's DOGE and OMB had found $50 million in taxpayer money to go toward condoms in Gaza. Trump amplified that claim in a speech the following day. Turns out, USAID didn't provide any condom aid to the entirety of the middle east region from 2021 through 2023, and "Reports for fiscal years 2007 through 2023 on contraceptives and condoms shipped by USAID to the rest of the world also do not show any record of condoms shipped to Gaza." (Reuters, source). In 2024 they provided around $45,000 in contraceptives and condoms to the Middle East, entirely to Jordan. Most of USAID reproductive healthcare goes to African countries. Musk has since walked back his claims, citing that "no one bats a thousand". But the damage had already been done. Discussions on soft power and whether the United States should or should not be providing aid to other countries were not had. The effectiveness of individual programs were not analyzed, and Congress did not participate in budgetary changes or reorganization of USAID. The Impoundment Control Act of 1974 restricts the President's ability to unilaterally withhold funds appropriated by Congress. "For recissions, the president must propose such actions to Congress for approval, and he can delay spending-related to recissions for 45 days." (National Constitution Center, source)
Sources and additional reading:
https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/no-evidence-us-spent-50-million-condoms-gaza-2025-01-30/
https://apnews.com/article/gaza-condoms-fact-check-trump-50-million-26884cac6c7097d7316ca50ca4145a82

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/01/29/gaza-condoms-fact-checker-trump/
https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/can-a-president-refuse-to-spend-funds-approved-by-congress

Musk and Investigative Journalism from Reuters

Over the years Reuters has reported on Elon Musk, investigative journalism including worker injuries at SpaceX, Tesla Car defects, his bid to put brain chips in humans, neuralink animal testing and more. Musk, has shown time and time again his disdain for being criticized. As a result, Musk has gone the route toward discreditation. This may not be an effective strategy given Reuters reputation for consistent quality, detail and lean towards non-bias. Musk however owns X, and as a result, has made many attempts at spreading his own and others criticisms of Reuters. A simple and recent example below showcases his attempts to discredit have geared up. Another below it showcases these type of posts are not post-election recent. These posts are not backed with any facts, data, or sources. They are easily digestible by the masses though, and that could prove more devastating.

(note the timestamp on this one)

Recap:

At our core, Americans are against government waste and fraud. That is why the U.S. government conducts audits every year, but the scope and type of audits vary across different agencies and levels of government.

While major agencies get audited annually, some program-specific audits occur on a scheduled basis (e.g., every 2–5 years) based on risk factors. High-risk areas, like Medicare, Social Security, and defense spending, get frequent audits due to their size and risk of fraud.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducts an annual audit of the federal government's consolidated financial statements.

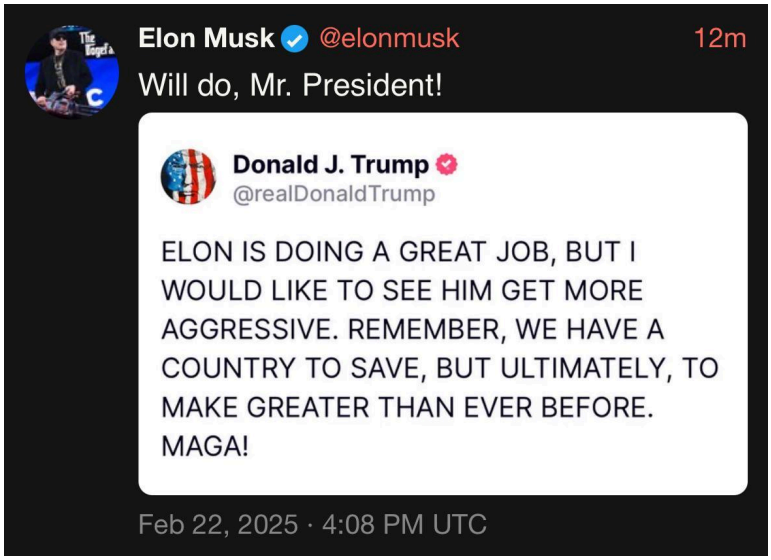
Each federal agency (e.g., Social Security Administration, Department of Defense) undergoes independent financial audits as required by law.

The Treasury Department releases an annual Financial Report of the U.S. Government summarizing these audits.

Every major federal agency has an Inspector General (IG) who conducts audits and investigations into fraud, waste, and abuse.

Reports are often publicly available through oversight.gov.

So the idea of a new government agency that investigates fraud and waste sounds great on the surface. Duplication of work and potential conflict of interests aside, Americans likely would not be having this type of reaction if DOGE was actually committed to performing an audit and making recommendations based on findings. The scale of this audit would require it to take time, thoroughness, and comprehension. What we are instead witnessing, as highlighted across multiple examples above, is Musk and DOGE's inability to understand the data they are looking at, indicating a lack of expertise in forensic auditing. I wanted to limit the number of examples to a few major ones being discussed as the familiarity with the disinformation Musk is spreading about them are more known. What isn't always easily known are the details. We have gotten to a point where headlines and social media posts are passing as factual statements. There are more instances of Musk and DOGE misrepresenting or outright lying about the data, contracts, and findings they report. If Musk can't interpret the governments information correctly, should he have our trust? Should he have the power to gut agencies, contracts, and more? This is all playing out in the courts, and time shall tell. To Americans, however, we must understand that if DOGE cancels contracts or takes direct control, it could violate laws protecting agency independence and sideline Congress, which has budgetary authority. The GAO and Inspectors General are designed to be nonpartisan and report fact-based financial oversight to Congress. If DOGE operates under a political appointee or an executive figure (e.g., Elon Musk), there is a risk of biased audits and politically motivated contract cancellations. What is incumbent upon you is to approach each claim with skepticism and conduct thorough research.


Elon Musk @elonmusk 12m
Will do, Mr. President!
Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
ELON IS DOING A GREAT JOB, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM GET MORE AGGRESSIVE. REMEMBER, WE HAVE A COUNTRY TO SAVE, BUT ULTIMATELY, TO MAKE GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE. MAGA!
Feb 22, 2025 · 4:08 PM UTC

Further and additional readings of importance:

ProPublica on DOGE funding and lack of transparency
https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-trump-musk-funding-foia-congress-transparency
DOGE released data about federal contract savings. It doesn't add up
https://www.npr.org/2025/02/19/nx-s1-5302705/doge-overstates-savings-federal-contracts
DOGE shared its receipts — and some of them don't match
https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/22/doge-data-errors-inconsistencies-00002576

Two important reads for understanding the real divide in this country:

50 years of tax cuts for the rich failed to trickle down, economics study says
https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tax-cuts-rich-50-years-no-trickle-down/
The Secret IRS Files: Trove of Never-Before-Seen Records Reveal How the Wealthiest Avoid Income Tax
https://www.propublica.org/article/the-secret-irs-files-trove-of-never-before-seen-records-reveal-how-the-wealthiest-avoid-income-tax